RFP-NIH-NIAID-DMID-03-45
Amendment #3 (Questions & Answers)

This Amendment provides questions submitted by potential Offerors and the responses provided by the NIAID. The responses are offered for information only and do not modify or become part of this solicitation. This Amendment will be updated at least weekly to add any further questions and their related responses. All potential offerors are advised to refer back to this Amendment #3 for additional Q&A.

"Administrative Resource for Biodefense Proteomic Centers"

Amendment to Solicitation No.:	NIH-NIAID-DMID-03-45
Amendment No.:	Three (3) 1st Posting: Questions 1-9 (posted 3/10/2003) **2nd Posting: Questions 10-25 (posted 7/5/2003)**
Amendment Date:	July 5, 2003
RFP Issue Date	December 12, 2002
Proposal Due Date/Time:	September 15, 2003; at 4:00 P.M., EST (CHANGED per Amendment 4)
Issued By:	Barbara A. Shadrick Contracting Officer CMB/DEA/NIAID/NIH/DHHS 6700-B Rockledge Drive, Room 2230, Bethesda, Maryland 20892-7612
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Offerors must acknowledge receipt of this Amendment #3, for each posting, on each copy of the proposal submitted. Failure to receive your acknowledgment of this Amendment may result in the rejection of your proposal.

The hour and date specified for receipt of proposals HAS NOT been extended.

The following questions and answers are provided concerning a number of inquiries we have received for the above numbered acquisition:

Question 1 What does "publicly accessible" mean? [Page 3, background, (1): Design, develop, and maintain a publicly accessible website; Page 4, (1(c)) (…website that contains): A publicly accessible, searchable database]

A web site that the public can access and that does not have any restrictions.

Question 2 . The web site will be publicly accessible, but the research data may be sensitive. Do you anticipate requiring multiple levels of secured access to particular sections of the web site and database?

At this point we do not anticipate requiring multiple levels of secured access to a particular section of the web site and database. We cannot be explicit at this time. There is a possibility that "sensitive" information may require different levels of secured access. Even if the Government does not require containment of "sensitive' information related to Biodefense, the contractor may need to partition data into different sections of the database – for example: restrict access to data deposited directly from the proteomics centers until the data can be validated – data will then be released into a section that is accessible by the research community at large.

Question 3 What kinds of proteomics analysis tools are envisioned? Are the analysis tools simple OLAP tools that support statistical reviews of the data or are they more specifically tied to the experimental platforms and the application domain? Is this a requirement to develop new analytic applications or to integrate existing COTS or analysis software developed at the research sites? [Page 5, Item 1.e (…website that contains): Data management and analysis tools for proteomics applications]

The RFP is very careful not to define the tools for proteomics application, since this will be recommended by proteomics sites and the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). The Offeror may want to give examples on what they have the capacity to provide or obtain from sources.

Question 4 What volume of existing data in terms of time (years/months) from the participating Proteomics Research Program systems need to be integrated at the time of final system implementation of the project?

As this is a new acquisition there is no existing data to be incorporated into databases/systems at the start of this project. It is important to realize that data will be generated during the course of the five years and the data will need to be incorporated continuously.

Question 5 What will be the frequency of data feed from the participating Proteomics Research Program systems?

It is difficult to predict the frequency of the data, since the data is generated by research done by the Proteomics Research Program

Question 6 Will users submit SQL queries directly to the database or will everything be facilitated by a GUI?

Both.

Question 7 What is the exact role of the SAC? Item 7 in the SOW addresses the formation of the committee, but we are uncertain as to which decisions the committee will actually be involved in. For example, will the SAC be expected to help define and construct the SOPs? Will they be expected to be involved in the development of the ontology? How about for the Proteomics Research Sites? To what degree will they be involved in producing these works?

The SAC's role is to provide expert advice to the NIAID on the general direction of the funded proteomics projects, including the progress, achievements, and future goals of each Proteomics Center, as well as the Administrative Center.

Question 8 To what degree would you expect the contractor (without the SAC or Research Sites) to propose, develop, or improve proteomics research methodologies?

The Proteomics Centers will be responsible for management and oversight of their own research projects. The roles and responsibilities of the Administrative Center are designated in RFP-03-45, and do not include development of proteomics technologies.

Question 9 Can you more specifically explain the implications of the clause relating to Intellectual Property (IP) under the database development section? Specifically, does this clause refer to IP that we might develop in the course of establishing the database, or is there some other meaning? Our assumption is that the purpose of this clause is to ensure that access to the listed items (data, protocols, reagents, etc.) is not encumbered in any way by IP claims that we may wish to make.

The Contractor shall administer their patent rights in a manner that will not conflict with the central goal of this contract, which is to make the data, techniques, protocols, reagents, and products (i.e. targets) generated by the Proteomics Centers freely available to the research community.

The Offeror may file patents for software, analysis tools, etc that they develop under this contract. However, the same Federal Acquisition Regulation clause, 52.227-14, Rights in Data –General applies to all IP developed under the planned contract. Please refer to the "Transition Plan" on page 7 of the RFP, paragraph 9.(c), Materials to be Transferred, for a list of materials that shall be transferred to Government.

Question 10 Is the Administrative Center responsible for developing analysis tools (we are assuming that we are responsible for the database management tools) for use by the Proteomics Research Program sites and the scientific community? Or will the Administrative Center only be responsible for incorporating analysis tools in the website that are developed by the Proteomics Research Program sites and/or 3rd parties? Section 1.e in the SOW implies the latter, while sections 9.a.1 and 9.c.3 imply the former.

Plan for both possibilities. The proteomics centers researchers, the SAC, and the scientific community are likely to provide input as to the data analysis tools that are needed, though the Administrative Center may also suggest the types of tools needed, as well as develop and incorporate such tools into the website (after SAC and Project Officer approval). Section 1.e. refers to the components of the data management system that the contractor is required to develop: "data management and analysis tools for proteomics applications, as recommended by the Proteomics sites and the SAC...."

Section 9 - refers to the deliverables that will be transferred to the government upon contract completion.

Question 11 Section 1.e. of the SOW states that, "These tools shall be utilized by each of the Proteomics Research Program sites for management and analysis of their own data." Does this mean that the Administrative Center must have the storage and computational infrastructure to allow the Proteomics Research Program sites to store and analyze preliminary data on the Administrative Center's servers? Or will only the "final" data (both raw and compiled) be forwarded to the Administrative Center for storage and analysis?

Section 1.e. of the Administrative Center RFP is referring to a comprehensive data management system that can handle large amounts of raw and complied data from the Proteomics center for public distribution. The Administrative Center shall make the analysis tools available to the Proteomics centers, as well as the public, for analysis of large data sets provided by the Proteomics Centers and stored on the centralized database.

You may want to refer to RFP NIH-NIAID-DMID-BAA-03-38 (Biodefense Proteomics Research Programs BAA), Research and Technical Objectives, bullet 6 on page 2 of the RFP. The proteomics centers are required to have their own bioinformatics and computational infrastructure to manage their data, including transfer of information to the proteomics centers.

Question 12 The range of tools and the computational power necessary to support them is broad. For budgetary purposes, can you provide a list of example tools that represent the expected capabilities of the Administrative Center?

It's the responsibility of the offeror to provide an example list of tools.

Question 13 For budgetary purposes, can you provide reference estimates of:

a. the number of users of the public website.
b. the frequency of data submissions (or a reference number of research projects).
c. the average size of data submissions.
d. the total storage capacity.
e. the service level (e.g., up-time) required for the website.

For a. through d., above, this information should be based on the offeror's understanding of the requirement and the approach described in the proposal. For e., the website shall be available 24/7.

Question 14 Will the contractor be responsible for direct purchase of hardware and software for use under this contract?

Yes

Question 15 Regarding Patent Rights (SOW Item 2, RFP pg. 8, NOTE 1): Is the contractor required to disclose patent information for items that will be used on the contract or corporate-wide?

Yes

Question 16 Is the Administrative Center required to be set up for public walk-in access (assuming that most information will be accessed via the web)?

Yes

Question 17 Are there any geographic restrictions on the center (e.g., proximity to NIH)?

No

Question 18 Do reagents/products mentioned in the Statement of Work, for which the contractor will provide assistance, include bacterial agents such as anthrax, viruses such as smallpox, and/or biological toxins such as ricin and extracts of such agents (e.g., for use as a standard control for experimental purposes?

The protein targets could be purified from agents above considered category A-C agents as described in the SOW.

Question 19 What activities are the SOPs in 1.g) designed to cover?]. It is not clear how the Administrative Center would facilitate the deposition of reagents and protein targets. What activities this will involve?

The offeror must define the procedures they will take to obtain the needed reagents and protocols from the Proteomic Research Program sites.

Question 20 Are these SOPs procedures for gaining access to electronic information or actual materials? If actual materials, are the SOPs for this defined by the organization where the physical repository is kept and does this requirement state that the website must post this information?

This is correct

Question 21 Will there be unformatted/formatted large texts to be stored "as is" or to be stored in a structured relational database format (Is there going to be raw research data feed directly from experimental platforms)? [Pg. 4, paragraphs 1.c)1) and 2)]

It is difficult to predict this since the data is generated by research done by the Proteomics Research Program. It is important to realize that data will be generated during the course of the five years and the data will need to be incorporated continuously.

Question 22 Is the RFP specifying a database which will serve as a central archive for raw data or a warehouse for annotated, integrated data, or both? [Page 5, paragraph 1.c)1) - 3)?

Both

Question 23 What is the estimated number of attendees for the programmatic meetings? [pg. 6, paragraph 8., Programmatic Meetings]

Approximately 50

Question 24 Is the Bethesda site for the meetings assumptions to be on the NIH campus or at a nearby hotel/conference facility? Does the hotel/conference facility need to be cleared at a certain level to hold these meetings? Is it estimated that any international experts will be attending the programmatic meetings? What type of meeting space arrangement is expected? (i.e., number of breakout rooms, plenary sessions) What time of year are the meetings expected to take place? Is food to be provided at these meetings? Is any special a/v equipment anticipated for the meetings? [pg. 6, Item 8., Programmatic Meetings].

The information provided on page 8 of the RFP, NOTE 2, is the best assumption we can provide at this time. You are to assume the meetings will be held in Bethesda, MD for two days. Specific needs cannot be determined until after award. Your proposal should provide your best assumption based on your experience with an explanation to support what you propose.